

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Ms. Wanda Evans, one of his secretaries.

CONGRATULATING THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT OF IRAQ ON ITS FORTHCOMING ASSUMPTION OF SOVEREIGN AUTHORITY IN IRAQ

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to the previous order of the House, and as the designee of the majority leader, I call up the resolution (H. Res. 691) congratulating the Interim Government of Iraq on its forthcoming assumption of sovereign authority in Iraq, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of H. Res. 691 is as follows:

H. RES. 691

Whereas in April 2003, the United States Armed Forces and other Coalition forces liberated the people of Iraq from the dictatorial regime of Saddam Hussein;

Whereas United Nations Security Council Resolution 1483 (May 22, 2003) and the laws and usages of war authorized the Coalition Provisional Authority to govern Iraq on a temporary basis;

Whereas the Coalition Provisional Authority established an Iraqi Governing Council, broadly representative of the major geographic, ethnic, and religious groupings of Iraq, as well as a Cabinet, to assist in the governing of Iraq, and the Council was recognized by many members of the international community as a legitimate voice of the Iraqi people;

Whereas the United States and other Coalition members, in response to the desire of the Iraqi people for early self-government, worked with the Iraqi Governing Council to accelerate the transfer of power to the Iraqi people, with sovereignty to be transferred no later than the end of June 2004;

Whereas the Coalition Provisional Authority and the Iraqi Governing Council on March 8, 2004, agreed upon a Law of Administration for the State of Iraq for the Transitional Period that strongly protects the civil and political rights of Iraqis;

Whereas that Law and its Annex provide for a transition of power to an Iraqi Interim Government, for elections by the end of January 2005, for a Transitional National Assembly, which shall form an Iraqi Transitional Government and provide for the drafting and adoption of a permanent constitution, and, by the end of 2005, for a government chosen under the new constitution;

Whereas the Iraqi people have begun electing local officials in parts of Iraq under Coalition auspices and will have the opportunity to express their will in free and meaningful national elections for the first time in Iraq's history;

Whereas the United Nations Secretary General appointed a Special Adviser to conduct political consultations aimed at putting in place an Interim Government to assume sovereignty over Iraq;

Whereas the Iraqi Governing Council made recommendations about the composition of the Interim Government, after which, when the recommendations were accepted by the Coalition Provisional Authority, the Council dissolved itself;

Whereas on June 8, 2004, the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1546, welcoming the formation and forthcoming "assumption of full respon-

sibility and authority by a fully sovereign and independent Interim Government of Iraq" and authorizing the multinational force under unified command to continue its activities;

Whereas the Coalition Provisional Authority will dissolve at the end of June 2004 and will not be replaced;

Whereas members of the United States Armed Forces, a total force consisting of active, reserve, and National Guard personnel, have performed their mission with great skill and courage, in the process being awarded at least 18 Distinguished Service Crosses, 6 Distinguished Flying Crosses, 133 Silver Stars, 16,551 Bronze Stars, and 4,161 Purple Hearts;

Whereas, as of June 23, 2004, 833 members of the United States Armed Forces, approximately 100 members of the Coalition forces, and many members of the Iraqi security services, have given their lives to advance the cause of liberty in Iraq, and thousands of members of the United States Armed Forces and Coalition forces, and many members of the Iraqi security services, have suffered wounds for that cause;

Whereas the families of American soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen have made and continue to make enormous sacrifices for their country;

Whereas in addition, Coalition forces, civilians employed by or assisting the Coalition Provisional Authority, the Iraqi government and its employees, international organizations, and American and other international volunteers, as well as large numbers of Iraqis, have made and continue to make enormous efforts to reconstruct the country and improve the lives of the Iraqi people;

Whereas Ambassador L. Paul Bremer, III, Presidential Envoy to Iraq and Administrator of the Coalition Provisional Authority, has ably advanced the international coalition's goals in Iraq of transforming Iraq into a safe, secure, stable, sovereign, democratic state that serves the interests of the Iraqi people;

Whereas the United States will be represented in Iraq by an Embassy led by Ambassador John D. Negroponte, and the United States will deal with the Government of Iraq on the basis of the sovereign equality of states under international law, including the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, to which both the United States and Iraq are parties;

Whereas after June 30, 2004, the Interim Government of Iraq and its successors, and United States Armed Forces and Coalition forces, will cooperate to meet ongoing security challenges and to extend security and stability to all regions of Iraq; and

Whereas the United States has never desired to exercise permanent sovereignty over Iraq and welcomes the formation of the Iraqi Interim Government and its imminent assumption of authority: Now, therefore, be it—

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) congratulates the Interim Government of Iraq on its forthcoming assumption of sovereign authority in Iraq;

(2) offers its continued support to the people and government of Iraq as they deal with the consequences of decades of misrule by the former regime of Saddam Hussein;

(3) expresses its gratitude to the United States Armed Forces for their ongoing valiant service to their country and commitment to the highest ideals and traditions of the American people;

(4) expresses its gratitude to the families of United States Armed Forces personnel, especially the families of those who have lost loved ones in Operation Iraqi Freedom and of

those wounded in the service of their country, for their sacrifices;

(5) expresses its condolences to the families of the innocent Iraqis who have been killed or wounded during the conflict, including those who were victimized by the illegal and terrorist tactics of the enemy, and despite the concerted efforts by the Coalition forces to minimize civilian casualties;

(6) expresses its gratitude to the Coalition forces, the Coalition Provisional Authority, the Iraqi Governing Council, the current Iraqi cabinet and government officials, and the many international bodies and voluntary organizations which have come to the aid of the people of Iraq in an effort to help them address the consequences of decades of misrule by the former regime of Saddam Hussein, as well as to the families of those mentioned in this paragraph, who have been lost in Iraq;

(7) offers its continued support to the United States Armed Forces, civilians associated with the United States Government, Coalition forces, and Iraqi security forces who continue to bear the burden of attacks from former regime elements, foreign and Iraqi terrorists, and other criminals who are attempting to undermine the interests of the Iraqi people and thwart their evident desire to live in peace;

(8) calls on the entire international community to promote the welfare of the Iraqi people by rendering, in addition to the generous assistance provided by the American people and, in varying degrees, by some nations, immediate, tangible, and generous assistance to the Iraqi people in the reconstruction of their nation, including, in response to requests from the Iraqi government coordinated with the command of the multinational forces, forces capable of assisting in the provision of security to the Iraqi people;

(9) reaffirms—

(A) that the United States Armed Forces operating in Iraq after June 30, 2004, will remain under the full authority, direction, and control of their American commanders; and

(B) the need to ensure that such Armed Forces will possess all necessary authority to fulfill their mission effectively and to provide for their operational safety; and

(10) urges the people of the United States and of other countries to celebrate the restoration of freedom to the people of Iraq through the efforts of the peoples of the United States, the Coalition, and Iraq.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of Wednesday, June 24, 2004, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE).

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN).

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank my esteemed chairman for yielding me time.

□ 1445

I rise in strong support of this resolution.

On June 30, as all of us know, Iraq will assume control of its own destiny. Iraq will enter the post-Saddam era with the hope of the world resting upon them. No longer will the Iraqi people be subjected to a climate of fear and desperation. Saddam's murderous,